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HENRY FORD, President.

C. J. FORD, Vice President.

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Rebuilding the Rural School

THERE was a time when the little red schoolhouse was the hub of the American educational system. But as the cities grew and more and more students made demands upon the universities, the rural school lost its pre-eminence. Men and women who entered educational work and received the training of universities and normal colleges almost invariably sought the larger fields of endeavor so that the standard of teaching in the country school fell further and further behind that in the cities.

Today educators are awakening to the fact that they have been like builders who construct a 16-story building on a foundation built to support two stories. They realize that the rural school is weak and that until it is strengthened the entire structure of American educational work will be faulty. It is as a result of this awakening that the men and women who guide the schools of the country are agitating in their state conventions for the immediate rehabilitation of the rural school, the introduction of modern methods of pedagogy and of the newest courses of study.

Rural education should be as much a part of the national program of educational work as university education and, while the two cannot be compared in any sense, it is certain that the rural school, since it supplies the fundamentals without which the other cannot exist, is the more important of the two. Lack of recognition of this has been responsible for the fact that educators generally came to look with condescension, if not contempt, upon positions in rural schools. And because the educators themselves placed a low value on the services of the country school-teacher it was but natural that the salaries paid those holding such positions were little better than the wages of unskilled labor.

It may take some time to rehabilitate the rural school but the task must be accomplished if we are to hope for the repopulation of our farms by progressive men and women. Few fathers and mothers will be willing to rear a family in a community which offers only the most meager educational advantages to its children, and intelligent parents will not willingly go back to the land, as they are being urged to do, until they are assured they will not deprive their children of the opportunity for an education by so doing.

Fortunately, each state is the sole guardian of its educational system and once the state boards of education can be brought to sense the necessity of giving special attention to the country schools the work of reconstruction will be quickly accomplished.

It is the task of the trained educators to awaken the public and the public's official servants, and their new interest in the rural problem is a hopeful sign that they are preparing to discharge this responsibility.

Prohibition's Friendly Enemies

DISCOVERY by the Federal authorities that bootleggers have been disposing of poisonous brews by camouflaging the bottles with counterfeit internal revenue stamps and labels is another instance of the way in which the rum runner destroys his illicit business and strengthens the efficacy of the very law which he seeks to destroy.

Up to the time of the announcement by Federal agents that large quantities of counterfeit stamps had been found in the possession of members of whisky

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rings in several parts of the country, the purchaser of contraband goods believed the seal of the revenue stamp afforded him complete protection. It was practically his last refuge, for his faith in unlabeled goods had been destroyed by the knowledge that the contents of unsealed containers were apt to be anything from wood alcohol to embalming fluid.

The announcement by the government that revenue stamps and even the labels of famous brands of liquors have been counterfeited in large quantities will do more to hasten the enforcement of the prohibition laws than a thousand special officers. Just as the first wood alcohol deaths dealt a blow at the illegal traffic which all but wiped out the sale of unsealed liquors, so the news that these deadly poisons are now masquerading under fraudulent stamps and labels in the guise of government-bonded goods will destroy in time the bulk of the illicit trade which remains.

There is no need to worry greatly over the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment. Its enemies are automatically destroying themselves by their own conscienceless greed.

Federal Divorce Legislation

WITH suffrage a fact we may expect to witness a recrudescence of activity in the movement to amend the Constitution, wipe out the varied state laws on divorce, and substitute Federal legislation therefor.

Divorce itself is scarcely a greater evil than the unsatisfactory state laws that now permit persons to go their respective ways. Scandals of the divorce court are not uncommon to the readers of daily newspapers, but there can be no remedy for such conditions with the present system obtaining.

One jurist recently said:

"I do not see why uniform laws on divorce are not as necessary as uniform bankruptcy laws. It would be possible for the local courts to administer and handle divorce cases just as naturalization work, provided for by Federal laws, is carried on in local courts. When a divorce case is filed, Federal officers could look up the case to be sure there is no collusion, and then the case could be tried in the regular way in the circuit court. It would be possible to get after men who move from one state to another to avoid paying alimony to their helpless wives and children."

As suggested, it would introduce a more serious note in marriage if it were known that the stern hand of Uncle Sam were raised to see that justice was meted out impartially to all.

Friends

A SHORT time ago a London newspaper offered a prize for the best definition of "A Friend." Among the many thousand answers which were received, the one that was awarded the first prize was:

"The first person who comes in when the world goes out."

The second prize was given to the definition sent in by a small boy, who wrote:

"A friend is a feller who knows all about you and likes you just the same."

Both of these definitions are worthy of thought.

How many times has every one needed a friend "when the world goes out" through the death of a loved one, the wreck of business or the failure to achieve one's most cherished desires! In those moments, many whom we have considered to be our friends have forsaken us. With the loss of money our so-called friends have melted away. With the decline of power and position those who have flattered us and made us believe that their friendship would be everlasting, are found among the missing. It is on those occasions that the first person who is ready to lend a helping hand, to breathe a word of consolation in our sorrow, be he the acquaintance of a day or of a lifetime, is a true friend.

In these days of rush and hurry, of moving from place to place as business or other requirements may dictate, we make many acquaintances, but few real friends, and as a man or woman advances toward middle life the chances of making new and tried friends diminish. It is those we have known since childhood, our schoolmates, our college chums, our first associates in business who are our staunchest friends. Never in the glamour of the new, who come to us with fair words and specious promises but who fade away like morning mists before the sun when storms of adversity arise, should we let go of an old and tried friend.

Shakespeare knew the value of an old friend when he wrote:

"Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

Yes, the old friends are the best—the "feller who knows all about you and likes you just the same."

Colloids in Character

IN A recent article in the *Scientific American*, Karl Knipe describes a colloid as that state of matter which lies between the world of size and form, of solid matter and the hazy realm of invisible electrons, atoms and molecules.

Rather highbrow—but interesting, when we consider that what is meant is that a colloid is so infinitely small that it cannot be seen even through an ordinary microscope, and a special attachment has to be used.

It is these colloidal particles in the human body which keep it from leaking when water, coffee, tea or other liquids are poured into it. We are not rubber-lined, and were it not for the colloids—well, something would happen.

In the industries colloids are most important, and are found to be a component of such products as glue, cement, rubber, inks, dyes, and so on. Nature also claims them. The asphalt from the pitch lake in Trinidad is full of them, and it is these colloids which give it such stability when used as a pavement.

The study of colloidal chemistry is most fascinating because it emphasizes the fact that it is the small things that are, very often, the most valuable. This is true in the moral as well as in the scientific world.

Charm is that intangible something that cannot be defined, and yet without which a person has lost much of his attractiveness. In character it is a colloid which binds the more rugged traits together and makes a pleasing whole. A man may be honest, virtuous, square in his dealings with all men, and a tireless worker, yet if charm is lacking he somehow fails to attract and draw people to him.

Tact is another colloid in character. How many persons there are who are as good as gold, dependable and true to the core, and yet are so outspoken and blunt in giving their opinions, and in their criticism of others, that they are disliked and avoided. It is so easy to say a thing in a pleasant way that will not offend, that it seems strange anyone should do otherwise. There is no reason to stir up a hornet's nest simply because you happen to have a stick in your hand. Let the colloid of Tact become a part of your make-up and see how much better people will like you.

Simplicity is another of these atoms which go to make up a disposition to be desired. The ostentatious man or woman, who with vulgar show and flashiness of dress endeavors to make a favorable impression, always fails except among those of his own kind. But every one is impressed with simplicity. The soft voice, the gentle touch, the quiet performance of duty, are the colloids in character which hold a person's love and friendship for the one who possesses them.

Memory experts tell us that the linking of a certain object with what we want to remember is a sure way of bringing it to our mind, when that object is again seen.

The next time you walk upon asphalt pavement, let it suggest to you, because of the colloids which it contains, the three colloids of character which have been enumerated, Charm, Tact and Simplicity, which every one should desire to possess.

Politeness and Profiteering

THE public would be more interested in the announced determination of coal mine operators to assist the Department of Justice in eliminating high prices if the operators said anything about making a material reduction in the cost of fuel. While expressing themselves as extremely willing to assist the Attorney-General in any way and while deploring unreasonably high prices, the operators declare they do not believe much profiteering exists and that if it does exist they themselves are not participating.

Boiled down, what the operators really subscribe to is a belief that prices should come down, but not *their* prices, and this, of course, is an attitude which at once wrecks all hopes for a material reduction in the cost of coal.

Everyone who has anything to do with mining, handling, transporting or selling coal has now participated in the game of "passing the buck." Mine owners, sales companies, railroads and retailers are all making just a bare living—if you will accept their verbal and forget their excess profit statements.

And, by the way, what possible good did the Department of Justice expect would result from their invitation to the coal mine operators to reduce profits? Is it possible that the department entertained the delusion that interests which have successfully and continuously exploited the public for the last two years would reform and lead better lives just at a time when winter is coming on?

Is it possible that there is that much credulity in the world?